

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendments, along with reconsideration of this application, are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 17-20, 22, 23, 28-31, 33, 34, 36-39, 41, 42, 46, 48-49, 51-53, 60-64, 66, 69-76, and 85-88 (claims 4-5, 7, 10-12, 18-20, and 23 being withdrawn) are currently pending with claims 1, 22, 36, 49, 60, 61, 62, and 66 being the independent claims.

Interview Summary

The undersigned wishes to express his appreciation to Examiner McEvoy for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview of February 9, 2011. During the interview, the cited prior art, the claims, and potential amendments to the claims were discussed.

The Claims are Allowable Over the Cited Art

It appears that claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 17, 22, 28-31, 33, 34, 36-39, 41, 42, 46, 48-49, 51-53, 60-64, 66, 69-76, and 85-88 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,105,392 to Biagi ("Biagi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,259,850 to Laliou ("Laliou") and U.S. Patent No. 5,632,163 to Inoue ("Inoue").

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite "the proximal end-piece defining an opening configured to receive at least a portion of an insertion device." Independent claims 22, 36, 49, 60, 61, 62, and 66 recite similar limitations. As discussed during the interview, the Examiner has not pointed to any portion of the cited prior art that discloses such a proximal end-piece. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 22, 36, 49, 60, 61, 62, and 66 and the claims that depend therefrom are allowable over the cited references and request that the rejections be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that no further impediments exist to the allowance of this application and, therefore, request an indication of allowability. The Examiner, however, is invited to call the undersigned if any questions or comments arise. It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. The absence, however, of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as intended to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

If necessary, please charge any deficiencies or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3521, referencing Attorney Docket No. 0073-077001.

Respectfully submitted,

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